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# imental Ditties

Rudyard Kipling

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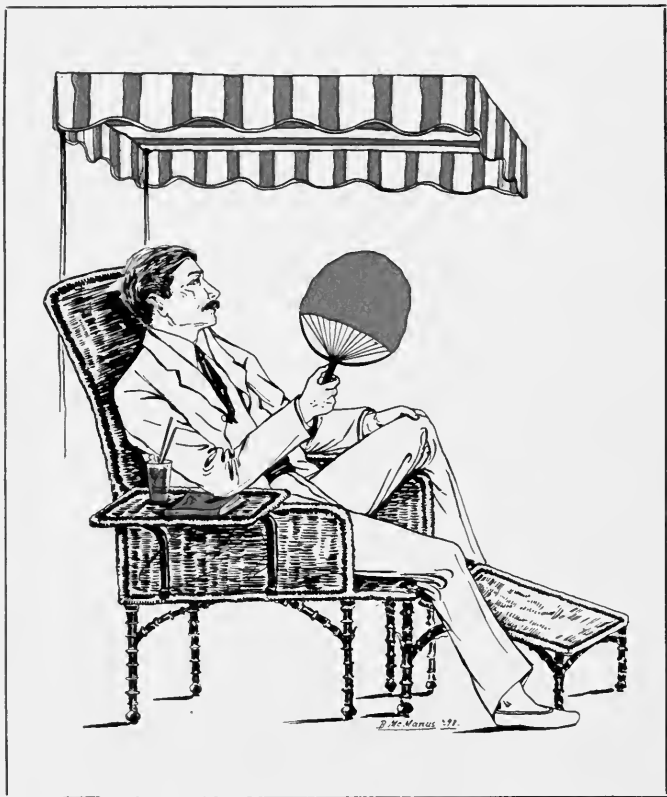




*Uniform with this volume, by Rudyard  
Kipling: Barrack-Room Ballads.*







DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES  
AND OTHER VERSES ❧ ❧

RUDYARD KIPLING

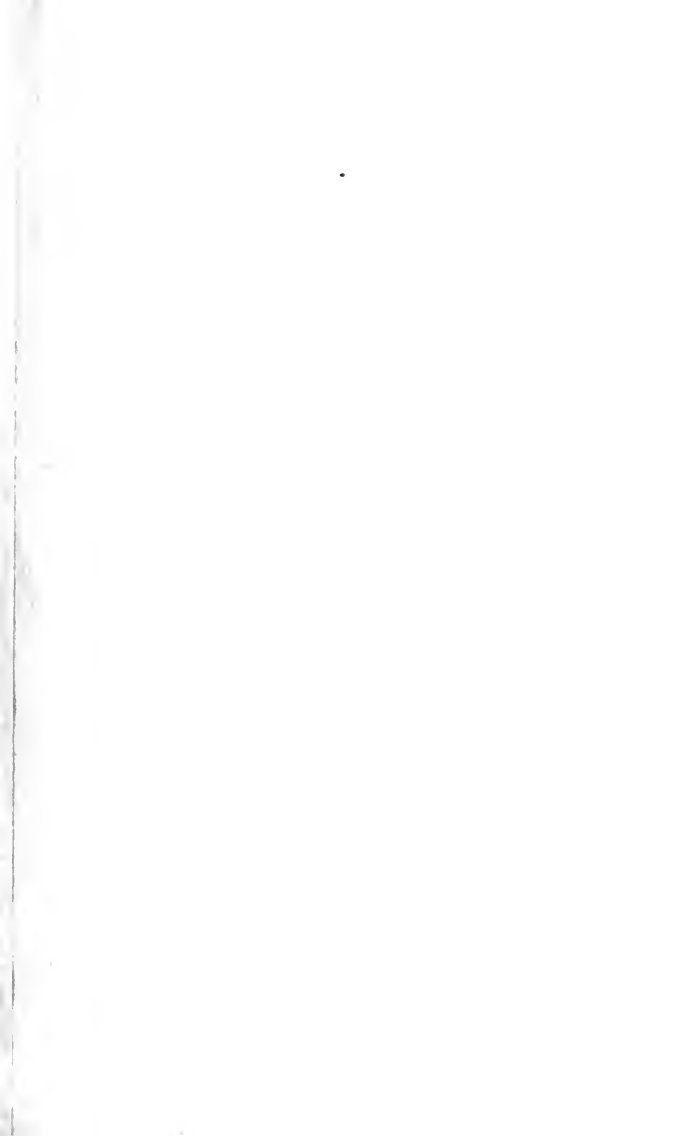


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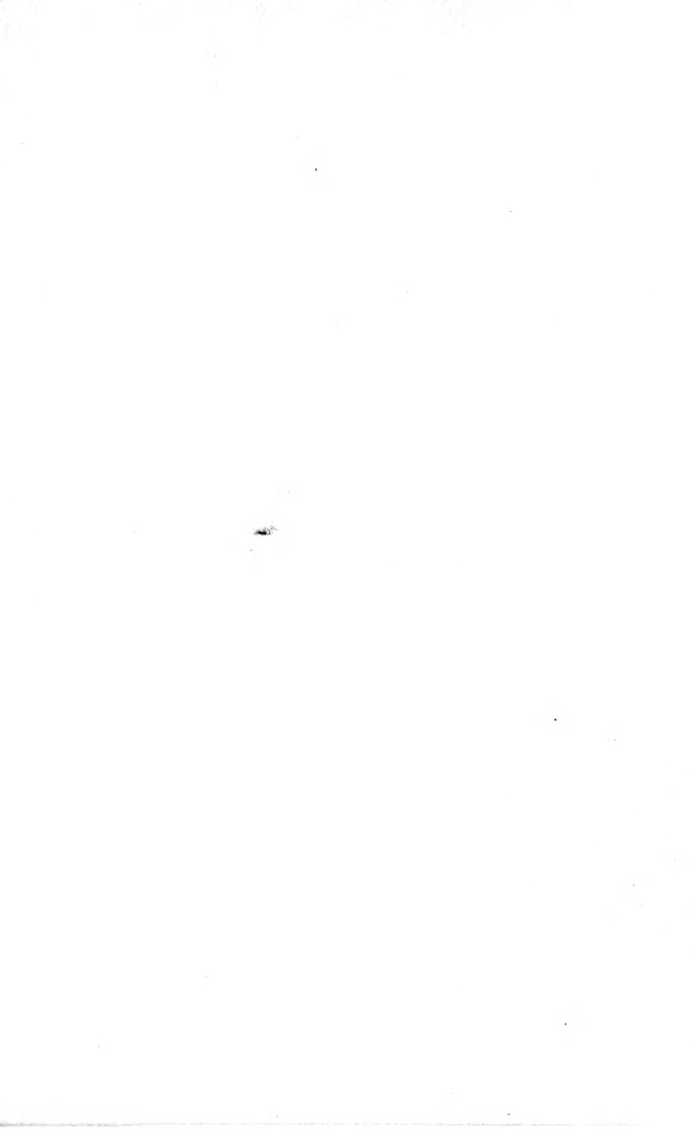
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DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES.



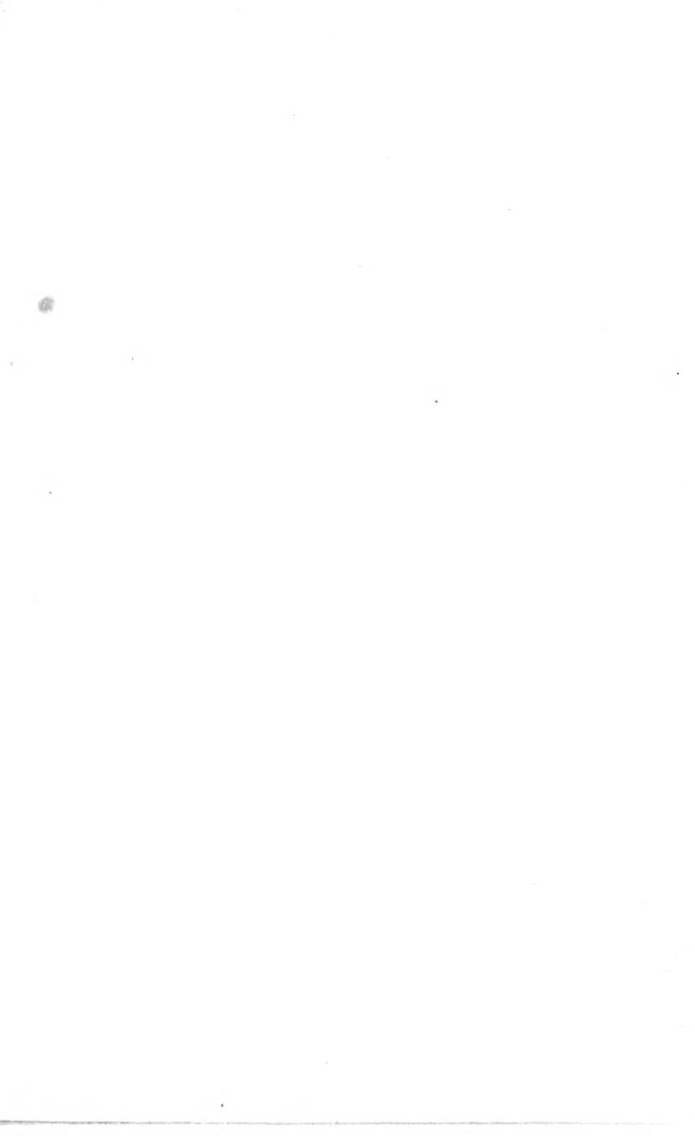


DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES.

I HAVE eaten your bread and salt,  
I have drunk your water and wine,  
The deaths ye died I have watched beside,  
And the lives that ye led were mine.

Was there aught that I did not share  
In vigil or toil or ease,—  
One joy or woe that I did not know,  
Dear hearts across the seas?

I have written the tale of our life  
For a sheltered people's mirth,  
In jesting guise—but ye are wise,  
And ye know what the jest is worth.



GENERAL SUMMARY.

WE are very slightly changed  
From the semi-apes who ranged  
India's prehistoric clay;  
Whoso drew the longest bow,  
Ran his brother down, you know,  
As we run men down to-day.

"Dowb," the first of all his race,  
Met the Mammoth face to face  
On the lake or in the cave,  
Stole the steadiest canoe,  
Ate the quarry others slew,  
Died—and took the finest grave.

When they scratched the reindeer-bone,  
Some one made the sketch his own,  
Filched it from the artist—then,  
Even in those early days,  
Won a simple Viceroy's praise  
Through the toil of other men.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

Ere they hewed the Sphinx's visage  
Favoritism governed kissage,  
Even as it does in this age.

Who shall doubt the secret hid  
Under Cheops' pyramid  
Was that the contractor did  
    Cheops out of several millions?  
Or that Joseph's sudden rise  
To Comptroller of Supplies  
Was a fraud of monstrous size  
    On King Pharaoh's swart Civilians?

Thus, the artless songs I sing  
Do not deal with anything  
    New or never said before.

As it was in the beginning,  
Is to-day official sinning,  
    And shall be for evermore.

THE POST THAT FITTED.

THOUGH tangled and twisted the course of true love,  
This ditty explains  
No tangle's so tangled it cannot improve  
If the Lover has brains.

ERE the steamer bore him Eastward,  
Sleary was engaged to marry  
An attractive girl at Tunbridge, whom he  
called "my little Carrie."  
Sleary's pay was very modest; Sleary was  
the other way.  
Who can cook a two-plate dinner on eight  
paltry dibs a day?

Long he pondered o'er the question in  
his scanty furnished quarters—  
Then proposed to Minnie Boffkin, eldest  
of Judge Boffkin's daughters.  
Certainly an impecunious Subaltern was  
not a catch,  
But the Boffkins knew that Minnie  
mightn't make another match.

THE POST THAT FITTED.

So they recognized the business, and, to  
feed and clothe the bride,  
Got him made a Something Something  
somewhere on the Bombay side.

Anyhow, the billet carried pay enough  
for him to marry—

As the artless Sleary put it:—"Just the  
thing for me and Carrie."

Did he, therefore, jilt Miss Boffkin—  
impulse of a baser mind?

No! He started epileptic fits of an appal-  
ling kind.

(Of his *modus operandi* only this much I  
could gather:—

"Pears' shaving sticks will give you little  
taste and lots of lather.")

Frequently in public places his affliction  
used to smite

Sleary with distressing vigor—always in  
the Boffkins' sight.

THE POST THAT FITTED.

Ere a week was over Minnie weepingly  
returned his ring,  
Told him his "unhappy weakness" stop-  
ped all thought of marrying.

Sleary bore the information with a chas-  
tened holy joy,—  
Epileptic fits don't matter in Political  
employ,—  
Wired three short words to Carrie—took  
his ticket, packed his kit—  
Bade farewell to Minnie Boffkin in one  
last, long, lingering fit.

Four weeks later, Carrie Sleary read—  
and laughed until she wept—  
Mrs. Boffkins' warning letter on the  
"wretched epilept."  
Year by year, in pious patience, vengeful  
Mrs. Boffkin sits  
Waiting for the Sleary babies to develop  
Sleary's fits.

STUDY OF AN ELEVATION, IN  
INDIAN INK.

THIS ditty is a string of lies.  
But—how the deuce did Gubbins rise?

POTIPHAR GUBBINS, C. E.,  
Stands at the top of the tree;  
And I muse in my bed on the reasons  
that led

To the hoisting of Potiphar G.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,  
Is seven years junior to Me;  
Each bridge that he makes he either  
buckles or breaks,  
And his work is as rough as he.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,  
Is coarse as a chimpanzee;  
And I can't understand why you gave  
him your hand,  
Lovely Mehitabel Lee.



STUDY OF AN ELEVATION, IN  
INDIAN INK.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,  
Is dear to the Powers that Be;  
For They bow and They smile in an affa-  
ble style  
Which is seldom accorded to Me.

Potiphar Gubbins, C. E.,  
Is certain as certain can be  
Of a highly paid post which is **claimed**  
by a host  
Of seniors—including Me.

Careless and lazy is he,  
Greatly inferior to Me.  
What is the spell that you manage so well,  
Commonplace Potiphar G.?

Lovely Mehitabel Lee,  
Let me inquire of thee,  
Should I have riz to what Potiphar is,  
Hadst thou been mated to Me?

A CODE OF MORALS.

LEST you should think this story true,  
I merely mention I  
Evolved it lately. 'Tis a most  
Unmitigated misstatement.

NOW Jones had left his new-wed  
bride to keep his house in order,  
And hied away to the Hurrum Hills above  
the Afghan border,  
To sit on a rock with a heliograph; but  
ere he left he taught  
His wife the wording of the Code that  
sets the miles at naught.

And love had made him very sage, as  
Nature made her fair;  
So Cupid and Apollo linked, *per* helio-  
graph, the pair.  
At dawn, across the Hurrum Hills, he  
flashed her counsel wise—  
At e'en, the dying sunset bore her hus-  
band's homilies.

A CODE OF MORALS.

He warned her 'gainst seductive youths  
in scarlet clad and gold,

As much as 'gainst the blandishments pa-  
ternal of the old;

But kept his gravest warnings for (hereby  
the ditty hangs)

That snowy-haired Lothario, Lieutenant-  
General Bangs.

'Twas General Bangs, with Aide and Staff,  
that tittipped on the way,

When they beheld a heliograph tempe-  
stuously at play;

They thought of Border risings, and of  
stations sacked and burnt—

So stopped to take the message down—  
and this is what they learnt:—

“ Dash dot dot, dot, dot dash, dot dash  
dot ” twice. The General swore.

“ Was ever General Officer addressed as  
'dear' before ?

A CODE OF MORALS.

‘My Love,’ i’ faith! ‘My Duck,’ Gad-zooks!  
‘My darling popsy-wop!’  
Spirit of great Lord Wolseley, *who* is on  
that mountain top?”

The artless Aide-de-camp was mute; the  
gilded Staff were still,  
As, dumb with pent-up mirth, they booked  
that message from the hill;  
For, clear as summer’s lightning flare,  
the husband’s warning ran:—  
“Don’t dance or ride with General Bangs  
—a most immoral man.”

(At dawn, across the Hurrum Hills, he  
flashed her counsel wise—  
But, howsoever Love be blind, the world  
at large hath eyes.)  
With damnatory dot and dash he helio-  
graphed his wife  
Some interesting details of the General’s  
private life.

A CODE OF MORALS.

The artless Aide-de-camp, was mute; the  
shining Staff were still,

And red and ever redder grew the Gen-  
eral's shaven gill.

And this is what he said at last (his feel-  
ings matter not):—

“I think we've tapped a private line.  
Hi! Threes about there! Trot!”

All honor unto Bangs, for ne'er did Jones  
thereafter know

By word or act official who read off that  
helio.;

But the tale is on the Frontier, and from  
Michni to Mooltan

They knew the worthy General as “that  
most immoral man.”

ARMY HEADQUARTERS.

OLD is the song that I sing—  
Old as my unpaid bills—  
Old as the chicken that *kitmutgars* bring  
Men at dāk-bungalows—old as the Hills.

A HASUERUS JENKINS of the  
“Operatic Own”

Was dowered with a tenor voice of *super-*  
Santley tone.

His views on equitation were, perhaps, a  
trifle queer;

He had no seat worth mentioning, but  
oh! he had an ear.

He clubbed his wretched company a  
dozen times a day,

He used to quit his charger in a parabolic  
way,

His method of saluting was the joy of all  
beholders,

But Ahasuerus Jenkins had a head upon  
his shoulders.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS.

He took two months to Simla when the  
year was at the spring,  
And underneath the deodars eternally  
did sing.

He warbled like a *bulbul*, but particularly  
at  
Cornelia Agrippina, who was musical and  
fat.

She controlled a humble husband, who in  
turn controlled a Dept.,  
Where Cornelia Agrippina's human sing-  
ing birds were kept  
From April to October on a plump retain-  
ing fee,  
Supplied, of course, *per mensem*, by the  
Indian Treasury.

Cornelia used to sing with him, and Jen-  
kins used to play;  
He praised unblushingly her notes, for he  
was false as they:

ARMY HEADQUARTERS.

So when the winds of April turned the  
budding roses brown,  
Cornelia told her husband:—"Tom, you  
mustn't send him down."

They haled him from his regiment, which  
didn't much regret him;  
They found for him an office stool, and  
on that stool they set him,  
To play with maps and catalogues three  
idle hours a day,  
And draw his plump retaining fee—which  
means his double pay.

Now, ever after dinner, when the coffee  
cups are brought,  
Ahasuerus waileth o'er the grand piano-  
forte;  
And, thanks to fair Cornelia, his fame  
hath waxen great,  
And Ahasuerus Jenkins is a power in the  
State.



A LEGEND OF THE FOREIGN  
OFFICE.

THIS is the reason why Rustum Beg,  
Rajah of Kolazai,  
Drinketh the "simpkin" and brandy peg,  
Maketh the money to fly,  
Vexeth a Government tender and kind,  
Also—but this is a detail—blind.

RUSTUM BEG of Kolazai—slightly  
backward native state—

Lusted for a C. S. I.,—so began to sani-  
tate.

Built a Jail and Hospital—nearly built a  
City drain—

Till his faithful subjects all thought their  
ruler was insane.

Strange departures made he then—yea,  
Departments stranger still,

Half a dozen Englishmen helped the  
Rajah with a will,

Talked of noble aims and high, hinted of  
a future fine

A LEGEND OF THE FOREIGN  
OFFICE.

For the State of Kolazai, on a strictly  
Western line.

Rajah Rustum held his peace; lowered  
octroi dues a half;

Organized a State Police; purified the  
Civil Staff;

Settled cess and tax afresh in a very  
liberal way;

Cut temptations of the flesh—also cut the  
Bukhshi's pay;

Roused his Secretariat to a fine Mahratta  
fury,

By a Hookum hinting at supervision of  
*dasturi*;

Turned the State of Kolazai very nearly  
upside down;

When the end of May was nigh, waited  
his achievement crown.





A LEGEND OF THE FOREIGN  
OFFICE.

Then the Birthday Honors came. Sad to  
state and sad to see,  
Stood against the Rajah's name nothing  
more than *C. I. E.*!

Things were lively for a week in the State  
of Kolazai.

Even now the people speak of that time  
regretfully.

How he disendowed the Jail—stopped at  
once the City drain;

Turned to beauty fair and frail—got his  
senses back again;

Doubled taxes, cesses, all; cleared away  
each new-built *thana*;

Turned the two-lakh Hospital into a  
superb *Zenana*;

Heaped upon the Bukhshi Sahib wealth  
and honors manifold;

A LEGEND OF THE FOREIGN  
OFFICE.

Clad himself in Eastern garb—squeezed  
his people as of old.

Happy, happy Kolazai! Never more will  
Rustum Beg

Play to catch the Viceroy's eye. He pre-  
fers the "simpkin" peg.

## THE STORY OF URIAH.

“Now there were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor.”

JACK BARRETT went to Quetta  
Because they told him to.

He left his wife at Simla

On three-fourths his monthly screw:

Jack Barrett died at Quetta

Ere the next month's pay he drew.

Jack Barrett went to Quetta.

He didn't understand

The reason of his transfer

From the pleasant mountain-land:

The season was September,

And it killed him out of hand.

Jack Barrett went to Quetta,

And there gave up the ghost,

Attempting two men's duty

In that very healthy post;

And Mrs. Barrett mourned for him

Five lively months at most.

THE STORY OF URIAH.

Jack Barrett's bones at Quetta

Enjoy profound repose;

But I shouldn't be astonished

If *now* his spirit knows

The reason of his transfer

From the Himalayan snows.

And, when the Last Great Bugle Call

Adown the Hurnai throbs,

When the last grim joke is entered

In the big black Book of Jobs,

And Quetta graveyards give again

Their victims to the air,

I shouldn't like to be the man

Who sent Jack Barrett there.



## PUBLIC WASTE.

WALPOLE talks of "a man and his price."  
List to a ditty queer—  
The sale of a Deputy-Acting-Vice-  
Resident-Engineer,  
Bought like a bullock, hoof and hide,  
By the Little Tin Gods on the Mountain Side.

BY the Laws of the Family Circle 'tis  
written in letters of brass  
That only a Colonel from Chatham can  
manage the Railways of State,  
Because of the gold on his breeks, and the  
subjects wherein he must pass;  
Because in all matters that deal not with  
Railways his knowledge is great.

Now Exeter Battleby Tring had labored  
from boyhood to eld  
On the Lines of the East and the West,  
and eke of the North and South;  
Many Lines had he built and surveyed—  
important the posts which he held;  
And the Lords of the Iron Horse were  
dumb when he opened his mouth.

PUBLIC WASTE.

Black as the raven his garb, and his heresies jettier still—

Hinting that Railways required lifetimes of study and knowledge;

Never clanked sword by his side—Vauban he knew not, nor drill—

Nor was his name on the list of the men who had passed through the “College.”

Wherefore the Little Tin Gods harried their little tin souls,

Seeing he came not from Chatham, jingled no spurs at his heels,

Knowing that, nevertheless, was he first on the Government rolls

For the billet of “Railway Instructor to Little Tin Gods on Wheels.”

Letters not seldom they wrote him, “having the honor to state,”

It would be better for all men if he were laid on the shelf:

PUBLIC WASTE.

Much would accrue to his bank book, and  
he consented to wait  
Until the Little Tin Gods built him a  
berth for himself.

“Special, well paid, and exempt from the  
Law of the Fifty and Five,  
Even to Ninety and Nine”—these were  
the terms of the pact:

Thus did the Little Tin Gods (long may  
Their Highnesses thrive!)  
Silence his mouth with rupees, keeping  
their Circle intact;

Appointing a Colonel from Chatham who  
managed the Bhamo State Line,  
(The which was one mile and one furlong  
—a guaranteed twenty-inch gauge).  
So Exeter Battleby Tring consented his  
claims to resign,  
And died, on four thousand a month, in  
the ninetieth year of his age.

DELILAH.

WE have another Viceroy now, those days are dead  
and done,  
Of Delilah Aberyswith and depraved Ulysses  
Gunne.

DELILAH ABERYSWITH was a  
lady—not too young—  
With a perfect taste in dresses, and a  
badly bitted tongue,  
With a thirst for information, and a  
greater thirst for praise,  
And a little house in Simla, in the Pre-  
historic Days.

By reason of her marriage to a gentleman  
in power,  
Delilah was acquainted with the gossip of  
the hour;  
And many little secrets, of a half-official  
kind,  
Were whispered to Delilah, and she bore  
them all in mind.

DELILAH.

She patronized extensively a man, Ulysses  
Gunne,

Whose mode of earning money was a low  
and shameful one.

He wrote for divers papers, which, as  
everybody knows,

Is worse than serving in a shop or scaring  
off the crows.

He praised her "queenly beauty" first;  
and, later on, he hinted

At the "vastness of her intellect" with  
compliments unstinted.

He went with her a-riding, and his love  
for her was such

That he lent her all his horses, and—she  
galled them very much.

One day, THEY brewed a secret of a fine  
financial sort;

It related to Appointments, to a Man and  
a Report.

DELILAH.

'Twas almost worth the keeping (only  
seven people knew it),  
And Gunne rose up to seek the truth and  
patiently ensue it.

It was a Viceroy's Secret, but—perhaps  
the wine was red—  
Perhaps an aged Councillor had lost his  
aged head—  
Perhaps Delilah's eyes were bright—  
Delilah's whispers sweet—  
The Aged Member told her what 'twere  
treason to repeat.

Ulysses went a-riding, and they talked of  
love and flowers;  
Ulysses went a-calling, and he called for  
several hours;  
Ulysses went a-waltzing, and Delilah  
helped him dance—  
Ulysses let the waltzes go, and waited for  
his chance.

DELILAH.

The summer sun was setting, and the  
summer air was still,  
The couple went a-walking in the shade  
of Summer Hill,  
The wasteful sunset faded out in turkis-  
green and gold,  
Ulysses pleaded softly and . . . that bad  
Delilah told!

Next morn a startled Empire learnt the  
all-important news;  
Next week the Aged Councillor was shak-  
ing in his shoes;  
Next month I met Delilah, and she did  
not show the least  
Hesitation in affirming that Ulysses was a  
“beast.”

. . . . .  
We have another Viceroy now, those days  
are dead and done,  
Of Delilah Aberyswith and most mean  
Ulysses Gunne!

WHAT HAPPENED.

HURREE CHUNDER MOOKER-  
JEE, pride of Bow Bazar,  
Owner of a native press, "Barrishter-at-  
Lar,"  
Waited on the Government with a claim  
to wear  
Sabres by the bucketful, rifles by the  
pair.

Then the Indian Government winked a  
wicked wink,  
Said to Chunder Mookerjee: "Stick to  
pen and ink,  
They are safer implements; but, if you  
insist,  
We will let you carry arms wheresoe'er  
you list."

Hurree Chunder Mookerjee sought the  
gunsmith and







WHAT HAPPENED.

Bought the tuber of Lancaster, Ballard,  
Dean and Bland,  
Bought a shiny bowie-knife, bought a  
town-made sword,  
Jingled like a carriage horse when he  
went abroad.

But the Indian Government, always keen  
to please,

Also gave permission to horrid men like  
these—

Yar Mahommed Yusufzai, down to kill or  
steal,

Chimbu Singh from Bikaner, Tantia the  
Bhil.

Killar Khan the Marri chief, Jowar Singh  
the Sikh,

Nubbee Baksh Punjabi Jat, Abdul Huq  
Rafiq—

He was a Wahabi; last, little Boh  
Hla-oo

WHAT HAPPENED.

Took advantage of the act—took a Snider  
too.

They were unenlightened men, Ballard  
knew them not,  
They procured their swords and guns  
chiefly on the spot,  
And the lore of centuries, plus a hundred  
fights,  
Made them slow to disregard one an-  
other's rights.

With a unanimity dear to patriot hearts  
All those hairy gentlemen out of foreign  
parts  
Said: "The good old days are back—  
let us go to war!"  
Swaggered down the Grand Trunk Road,  
into Bow Bazar.

Nubbee Baksh Punjabi Jat found a hide-  
bound flail,

WHAT HAPPENED.

Chimbu Singh from Bikaner oiled his  
Tonk jezail,  
Yar Mahommed Yusufzai spat and grinned  
with glee  
As he ground the butcher-knife of the  
Khyberree.

Jowar Singh the Sikh procured sabre,  
quoit, and mace,  
Abdul Huq, Wahabi, took the dagger  
from its place,  
While amid the jungle-grass danced and  
grinned and jabbered  
Little Boh Hla-oo and cleared the dah-  
blade from the scabbard.

What became of Mookerjee? Soothly,  
who can say?  
Yar Mahommed only grins in a nasty  
way,  
Jowar Singh is reticent, Chimbu Singh is  
mute,

WHAT HAPPENED.

But the belts of them all simply bulge  
with loot.

What became of Ballard's guns ? Afghans  
black and grubby

Sell them for their silver weight to the  
men of Pubbi;

And the shiny bowie-knife and the town-  
made sword are

Hanging in a Marri camp just across the  
Border.

What became of Mookerjee ? Ask Ma-  
hommed Yar

Prodding Siva's sacred bull down the  
Bow Bazar.

Speak to placid Nubbee Baksh—question  
land and sea—

Ask the Indian Congress men—only don't  
ask me!

PINK DOMINOES.

"THEY are fools who kiss and tell,"  
Wisely has the poet sung.  
Man may hold all sorts of posts  
If he'll only hold his tongue.

JENNY and Me were engaged, you  
see,

On the eve of the Fancy Ball;  
So a kiss or two was nothing to you  
Or any one else at all.

Jenny would go in a domino—  
Pretty and pink but warm;  
While I attended, clad in a splendid  
Austrian uniform.

Now we had arranged, through notes ex-  
changed

Early that afternoon,  
At Number Four to waltz no more,  
But to sit in the dusk and spoon.

(I wish you to see that Jenny and Me  
Had barely exchanged our troth;

PINK DOMINOES.

So a kiss or two was strictly due  
By, from, and between us both.)

When Three was over, an eager lover,  
I fled to the gloom outside;  
And a Domino came out also  
Whom I took for my future bride.

That is to say, in a casual way,  
I slipped my arm around her;  
With a kiss or two (which is nothing to  
you),  
And ready to kiss I found her.

She turned her head and the name she  
said  
Was certainly not my own;  
But ere I could speak, with a smothered  
shriek  
She fled and left me alone.

Then Jenny came, and I saw with shame  
She'd doffed her domino;



PINK DOMINOES.

And I had embraced an alien waist—

But I did not tell her so.

Next morn I knew that there were two

Dominoes pink, and one

Had cloaked the spouse of Sir Julian

Vouse,

Our big political gun.

Sir J. was old, and her hair was gold,

And her eye was a blue cerulean;

And the name she said when she turned

her head

Was not in the least like “Julian.”

Now wasn't it nice, when want of *pice*

Forbade us twain to marry,

That old Sir J., in the kindest way,

Made me his *Secretarry*?

THE MAN WHO COULD WRITE.

SHUN—shun the Bowl! That fatal, facile drink  
Has ruined many geese who dipped their quills  
in't:

Bribe, murder, marry, but steer clear of Ink  
Save when you write receipts for paid-up bills in't.  
There may be silver in the "blue-black"—all  
I know of is the iron and the gall.

**B**OANERGES BLITZEN, servant of  
the Queen,

Is a dismal failure—is a Might-have-  
been.

In a luckless moment he discovered men  
Rise to high position through a ready  
pen.

Boanerges Blitzen argued, therefore: "I  
With the selfsame weapon can attain as  
high."

Only he did not possess, when he made  
the trial,

Wicked wit of C-lv-n, irony of L——l.

(Men who spar with Government, need  
to back their blows,

THE MAN WHO COULD WRITE.

Something more than ordinary journalistic prose.)

Never young Civilian's prospects were so bright,

Till an Indian paper found that he could write:

Never young Civilian's prospects were so dark,

When the wretched Blitzen wrote to make his mark.

Certainly he scored it, bold and black and firm,

In that Indian paper—made his seniors squirm,

Quoted office scandals, wrote the tactless truth—

Was there ever known a more misguided youth?

When the rag he wrote for, praised his plucky game,

THE MAN WHO COULD WRITE.

Boanerges Blitzen felt that this was  
Fame:

When the men he wrote of, shook their  
heads and swore,  
Boanerges Blitzen only wrote the more.

Posed as Young Ithuriel, resolute and  
grim,  
Till he found promotion didn't come to  
him;  
Till he found that reprimands weekly  
were his lot,  
And his many Districts curiously hot.

Till he found his furlough strangely hard  
to win,  
Boanerges Blitzen didn't care a pin:  
Then it seemed to dawn on him some-  
thing wasn't right--  
Boanerges Blitzen put it down to  
"spite."

THE MAN WHO COULD WRITE.

Languished in a District desolate and  
dry;

Watched the Local Government yearly  
pass him by;

Wondered where the hitch was; called it  
most unfair.

. . . . .

That was seven years ago—and he still  
is there.

## MUNICIPAL.

“WHY is my District death-rate low?”

Said Blinks of Hezebad.

“Wells, drains, and sewage-outfalls are

My own peculiar fad.

I learned a lesson once. It ran

Thus,” quote that most veracious man :—

I T was an August evening, and, in  
snowy garments clad,

I paid a round of visits in the lines of  
Hezebad;

When, presently, my Waler saw, and did  
not like at all,

A Commissariat elephant careering down  
the Mall.

I couldn't see the driver, and across my  
mind it rushed

That the Commissariat elephant had sud-  
denly gone *musth*.

I didn't care to meet him, and I couldn't  
well get down,

So I let the Waler have it, and we  
headed for the town.







MUNICIPAL.

The buggy was a new one, and, praise  
Dykes, it stood the strain,  
Till the Waler jumped a bullock just  
above the City Drain;  
And the next that I remember was a hur-  
ricane of squeals,  
And the creature making toothpicks of  
my five-foot patent wheels.

He seemed to want the owner, so I fled,  
distraught with fear,  
To the Main Drain sewage-outfall while  
he snorted in my ear—  
Reached the four-foot drain-head safely,  
and, in darkness and despair,  
Felt the brute's proboscis fingering my  
terror-stiffened hair.

Heard it trumpet on my shoulder—tried  
to crawl a little higher—

MUNICIPAL.

Found the Main Drain sewage-outfall  
blocked, some eight feet up, with  
mire;

And, for twenty reeking minutes, Sir, my  
very marrow froze,

While the trunk was feeling blindly for a  
purchase on my toes!

It missed me by a fraction, but my hair  
was turning gray

Before they called the drivers up and  
dragged the brute away.

Then I sought the City Elders, and my  
words were very plain.

They flushed that four-foot drain-head,  
and—it never choked again.

You may hold with surface-drainage, and  
the sun-for-garbage cure,

Till you've been a periwinkle shrinking  
coily up a sewer.

MUNICIPAL.

*I* believe in well-flushed culverts . . .

This is why the death-rate's small;

And, if you don't believe me, get *shik-*  
*arred* yourself. That's all.

## THE LAST DEPARTMENT.

TWELVE hundred million men are spread  
About this Earth, and I and You  
Wonder, when You and I are dead,  
What will those luckless millions do.

“NONE whole or clean,” we cry,  
“or free from stain

Of favor.” Wait awhile, till we attain

The Last Department, where nor fraud  
nor fools,

Nor grade nor greed, shall trouble us  
again.

Fear, Favor, or Affection—what are  
these

To the grim Head who claims our ser-  
vices ?

I never knew a wife or interest yet  
Delay that *pukka* step, miscalled “de-  
cease;”

When leave, long over-due, none can  
deny;

THE LAST DEPARTMENT.

When idleness of all Eternity

Becomes our furlough, and the marigold  
Our thriftless, bullion-minting Treasury.

Transferred to the Eternal Settlement  
Each in his strait, wood-scantled office  
pent,

No longer Brown reverses Smith's ap-  
peals,

Or Jones records his Minute of Dissent.

And One, long since a pillar of the Court,  
As mud between the beams thereof is  
wrought;

And One who wrote on phosphates for  
the crops

Is subject-matter of his own Report.

(These be the glorious ends whereto we  
pass—

Let Him who Is, go call on Him who  
Was;

THE LAST DEPARTMENT.

And He shall see the *mallee* steals the  
slab  
For currie-grinder, and for goats the  
grass.)

A breath of wind, a Border bullet's  
flight,  
A draught of water, or a horse's fright—  
The droning of the fat *Sheristadar*  
Ceases, the punkah stops, and falls the  
night

For you or Me. Do those who live de-  
cline  
The step that offers, or their work  
resign?

Trust me, To-day's Most Indispens-  
ables,  
Five hundred men can take your place or  
mine.

OTHER VERSES.





TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS.

WILL you conquer my heart with  
your beauty; my soul going out  
from afar?

Shall I fall to your hand as a victim of  
crafty and cautious *shikar*?

Have I met you and passed you already,  
unknowing, unthinking and blind?

Shall I meet you next session at Simla, O  
sweetest and best of your kind?

Does the P. and O. bear you to me-ward,  
or, clad in short frocks in the West,  
Are you growing the charms that shall  
capture and torture the heart in my  
breast?

Will you stay in the Plains till September  
—my passion as warm as the day?

Will you bring me to book on the Moun-  
tains, or where the thermantidotes  
play?

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS.

When the light of your eyes shall make  
pallid the mean lesser lights I pursue,  
sue,

And the charm of your presence shall  
lure me from love of the gay “thirteen-two;”

When the peg and the pigskin shall please  
not; when I buy me Calcutta-built  
clothes;

When I quit the Delight of Wild Asses;  
forswearing the swearing of oaths;

As a deer to the hand of the hunter when  
I turn 'mid the gibes of my friends;  
When the days of my freedom are numbered,  
and the life of the bachelor ends.

Ah Goddess! child, spinster, or widow—  
as of old on Mars Hill when they  
raised

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS.

To the God that they knew not an altar  
—so I, a young Pagan, have praised

The Goddess I know not nor worship;  
yet, if half that men tell me be true,  
You will come in the future, and there-  
fore these verses are written to you.

LA NUIT BLANCHE.

A MUCH-DISCERNING Public hold  
The Singer generally sings  
Of personal and private things,  
And prints and sells his past for gold.

Whatever I may here disclaim,  
The very clever folk I sing to  
Will most indubitably cling to  
Their pet delusion, just the same.

I HAD seen, as dawn was breaking  
And I staggered to my rest,  
Tari Devi softly shaking  
From the Cart Road to the crest.  
I had seen the spurs of Jakko  
Heave and quiver, swell and sink.  
Was it Earthquake or tobacco,  
Day of Doom or Night of Drink ?

In the full, fresh, fragrant morning  
I observed a camel crawl,  
Laws of gravitation scorning,  
On the ceiling and the wall;

LA NUIT BLANCHE.

Then I watched a fender walking,  
And I heard gray leeches sing,  
And a red-hot monkey talking  
Did not seem the proper thing.

Then a Creature, skinned and crimson,  
Ran about the floor and cried,  
And they said I had the "jims" on,  
And they dosed me with bromide,  
And they locked me in my bedroom—  
Me and one wee Blood Red Mouse—  
Though I said: "To give my head room  
You had best unroof the house."

But my words were all unheeded,  
Though I told the grave M. D.  
That the treatment really needed  
Was a dip in open sea  
That was lapping just below me,  
Smooth as silver, white as snow,  
And it took three men to throw me  
When I found I could not go.

LA NUIT BLANCHE.

Half the night I watched the Heavens

Fizz like '81 champagne—

Fly to sixes and to sevens,

Wheel and thunder back again;

And when all was peace and order

Save one planet nailed askew,

Much I wept because my warder

Would not let me set it true.

After frenzied hours of waiting,

When the Earth and Skies were dumb,

Pealed an awful voice dictating

An interminable sum,

Changing to a tangled story—

“What she said you said I said”—

Till the Moon arose in glory,

And I found her . . . in my head;

Then a Face came, blind and weeping,

And It couldn't wipe Its eyes,

And It muttered I was keeping

Back the moonlight from the skies;

LA NUIT BLANCHE.

So I patted It for pity,  
    But It whistled shrill with wrath,  
And a huge black Devil City  
    Poured its peoples on my path.

So I fled with steps uncertain  
    On a thousand-year long race,  
But the bellying of the curtain  
    Kept me always in one place;  
While the tumult rose and maddened  
    To the roar of Earth on fire,  
Ere it ebbed and sank and saddened  
    To a whisper tense as wire.

In intolerable stillness  
    Rose one little, little star,  
And it chuckled at my illness,  
    And it mocked me from afar;  
And its brethren came and eyed me,  
    Called the Universe to aid;  
Till I lay, with naught to hide me,  
    'Neath the Scorn of All Things Made.

LA NUIT BLANCHE.

Dun and saffron, robed and splendid,  
    Broke the solemn, pitying Day,  
And I knew my pains were ended,  
    And I turned and tried to pray;  
But my speech was shattered wholly,  
    And I wept as children weep,  
Till the dawn-wind, softly, slowly  
    Brought to burning eyelids sleep.



MY RIVAL.

I GO to concert, party, ball—  
What profit is in these?

I sit alone against the wall

And strive to look at ease.

The incense that is mine by right

They burn before Her shrine;

And that's because I'm seventeen

And She is forty-nine.

I cannot check my girlish blush,

My color comes and goes;

I redden to my finger-tips,

And sometimes to my nose.

But She is white where white should be,

And red where red should shine.

The blush that flies at seventeen

Is fixed at forty-nine.

I wish I had Her constant cheek:

I wish that I could sing

All sorts of funny little songs,

Not quite the proper thing.

MY RIVAL.

*gosh - awkward*  
I'm very *gauche* and very shy,  
Her jokes aren't in my line;  
And, worst of all, I'm seventeen  
While She is forty-nine.

The young men come, the young men go,  
Each pink and white and neat,  
She's older than their mothers, but  
They grovel at Her feet.  
They walk beside Her '*rickshaw* wheels—  
None ever walk by mine;  
And that's because I'm seventeen  
And She is forty-nine.

She rides with half a dozen men,  
(She calls them "boys" and "mashers")  
I trot along the Mall alone;  
My prettiest frocks and sashes  
Don't help to fill my programme-card,  
And vainly I repine  
From ten to two A.M. Ah me!  
Would I were forty-nine!

MY RIVAL.

She calls me "darling," "pet," and  
"dear,"

And "sweet retiring maid."

I'm always at the back, I know,

She puts me in the shade.

She introduces me to men,

"Cast" lovers, I opine,

For sixty takes to seventeen,

Nineteen to forty-nine.

But even She must older grow

And end Her dancing days,

She can't go on forever so

At concerts, bails, and plays.

One ray of priceless hope I see

Before my footsteps shine:

Just think, that She'll be eighty-one

when I am forty-nine.

THE LOVERS' LITANY.

EYES of gray — a sodden quay,  
Driving rain and falling tears,  
As the steamer wears to sea  
In a parting storm of cheers.

Sing, for Faith and Hope are high—  
None so true as you and I—  
Sing the Lovers' Litany:—  
“ *Love like ours can never die!* ”

Eyes of black—a throbbing keel,  
Milky foam to left and right;  
Whispered converse near the wheel  
In the brilliant tropic night.

Cross that rules the Southern Sky!  
Stars that sweep and wheel and fly  
Hear the Lovers' Litany:—  
“ *Love like ours can never die!* ”

Eyes of brown—a dusty plain  
Split and parched with heat of June,

THE LOVERS LITANY.

Flying hoof and tightened rein,  
Hearts that beat the old, old tune.

Side by side the horses fly,  
Frame we now the old reply  
Of the Lovers' Litany:—

*“ Love like ours can never die ! ”*

Eyes of blue—the Simla Hills  
Silvered with the moonlight hoar;  
Pleading of the waltz that thrills,  
Dies and echoes round Benmore.

*“ Mabel,” “ Officers,” “ Good-by,”*

Glamour, wine, and witchery—  
On my soul's sincerity,

*“ Love like ours can never die ! ”*

Maidens, of your charity,  
Pity my most luckless state.  
Four times Cupid's debtor I—  
Bankrupt in quadruplicate.

THE LOVERS' LITANY.

Yet, despite this evil case,  
An a maiden showed me grace,  
Four-and-forty times would I  
Sing the Lovers' Litany:—  
“*Love like ours can never die!*”

A BALLAD OF BURIAL.

(*"Saint Praxed's ever was the Church for Peace."*)

I F down here I chance to die,  
Solemnly I beg you take  
All that is left of "I"  
To the Hills for old sake's sake.  
Pack me very thoroughly  
In the ice that used to slake  
Pegs I drank when I was dry—  
This observe for old sake's sake.

To the railway station hie,  
There a single ticket take  
For Umballa—goods train—I  
Shall not mind delay or shake.  
I shall rest contentedly  
Spite of clamor coolies make;  
Thus in state and dignity  
Send me up for old sake's sake.

Next the sleepy Babu wake,  
Book a Kalka van "for four."  
Few, I think, will care to make  
Journeys with me any more

A BALLAD OF BURIAL.

As they used to do of yore.

I shall need a "special" break—  
Thing I never took before—

Get me one for old sake's sake.

After that—arrangements make.

No hotel will take me in,  
And a bullock's back would break  
'Neath the teak and leaden skin.

Tonga ropes are frail and thin,

Or, did I a back seat take,  
In a tonga I might spin—

Do your best for old sake's sake.

After that—your work is done.

Recollect a Padre must  
Mourn the dear departed one—

Throw the ashes and the dust.

Don't go down at once. I trust

You will find excuse to "snake  
Three days' casual on the bust,"

Get your fun for old sake's sake.



A BALLAD OF BURIAL.

I could never stand the Plains.

Think of blazing June and May,  
Think of those September rains  
Yearly till the Judgment Day!

I should never rest in peace,

I should sweat and lie awake.

Rail me, then, on my decease,

To the Hills for old sake's sake.

PAGETT, M.P.

THE toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to that toad.

PAGETT, M.P., was a liar, and a  
fluent liar therewith,—  
He spoke of the heat of India as the  
“Asian Solar Myth;”  
Came on a four months’ visit, to “study  
the East,” in November,  
And I got him to sign an agreement vow-  
ing to stay till September.

March came in with the *köil*. Pagett  
was cool and gay,  
Called me a “bloated Brahmin,” talked  
of my “princely pay.”  
March went out with the roses. “Where  
is your heat?” said he.  
“Coming,” said I to Pagett. “Skittles!”  
said Pagett, M.P.





PAGETT, M.P.

April began with the punkah, coolies, and  
prickly-heat,—

Pagett was dear to mosquitoes, sandflies  
found him a treat.

He grew speckled and lumpy—hammered,  
I grieve to say,

Aryan brothers who fanned him, in an  
illiberal way.

May set in with a dust-storm,—Pagett  
went down with the sun.

All the delights of the season tickled him  
one by one.

*Imprimis*—ten days' "liver"—due to his  
drinking beer;

Later, a dose of fever—slight, but he  
called it severe.

Dysent'ry touched him in June, after the  
*Chota Bursat*—

Lowered his portly person—made him  
yearn to depart.

PAGETT, M.P.

He didn't call me a "Brahmin," or  
"bloated," or "overpaid,"  
But seemed to think it a wonder that any  
one stayed.

July was a trifle unhealthy,—Pagett was ill  
with fear,

Called it the "Cholera Morbus," hinted  
that life was dear.

He babbled of "Eastern exile," and men-  
tioned his home with tears;

But I hadn't seen *my* children for close  
upon seven years.

We reached a hundred and twenty once  
in the Court at noon,

(I've mentioned Pagett was portly) Pagett  
went off in a swoon.

That was an end to the business; Pagett,  
the perjurer, fled

With a practical, working knowledge of  
"Solar Myths" in his head.

PAGETT, M.P.

And I laughed as I drove from the station,  
but the mirth died out on my lips  
As I thought of the fools like Pagett who  
write of their "Eastern trips,"  
And the sneers of the travelled idiots who  
duly misgovern the land,  
And I prayed to the Lord to deliver another one into my hand.

THE RUPAIYAT OF OMAR KAL  
VIN.

[ALLOWING for the difference 'twixt prose and rhymed exaggeration, this ought to reproduce the sense of what Sir A— told the nation some time ago, when the Government struck from our incomes two per cent.]

NOW the New Year, reviving last  
Year's Debt,  
The Thoughtful Fisher casteth wide his  
Net;  
So I with begging Dish and ready  
Tongue  
Assail all Men for all that I can get.

Imports indeed are gone with all their  
Dues—  
Lo! Salt a Lever that I dare not use,  
Nor may I ask the Tillers in Bengal—  
Surely my Kith and Kin will not refuse!  
Pay—and I promise, by the Dust of  
Spring,



THE RUPAIYAT OF OMAR KAL

VIN.

Retrenchment. If my promises can bring  
Comfort, Ye have Them now a thousand-  
fold—

By Allah! I will promise *Anything!*

Indeed, indeed, Retrenchment oft before  
I swore—but did I mean it when I swore?

And then, and then, We wandered to  
the Hills,  
And so the Little Less became Much  
More.

Whether at Boileaugunge or Babylon,  
I know not how the wretched Thing is  
done,

The Items of Receipt grow surely small;  
The Items of Expense mount one by one.

I cannot help it. What have I to do  
With One and Five, or Four, or Three, or  
Two?

THE RUPAIYAT OF OMAR KAL  
VIN.

Let Scribes spit Blood and Sulphur as  
they please,  
Or Statemen call me foolish—Heed not  
you.

Behold, I promise—Anything You will.  
Behold, I greet you with an empty Till—  
Ah! Fellow-Sinners, of your Charity  
Seek not the Reason of the Dearth, but  
fill.

For if I sinned and fell, where lies the  
Gain  
Of Knowledge? Would it ease you of  
your Pain  
To know the tangled Threads of Rev-  
enue,  
I ravel deeper in a hopeless Skein?  
“Who hath not Prudence”—what was it  
I said,

THE RUPAIYAT OF OMAR KAL  
VIN.

Of Her who paints Her Eyes and tires Her  
Head,  
And gibes and mocks the People in the  
Street,  
And fawns upon them for Her thriftless  
Bread ?

Accursed is She of Eve's daughters—She  
Hath cast off Prudence, and Her End  
shall be

Destruction . . . Brethren, of your  
Bounty grant  
Some portion of your daily Bread to *Me*

THE MARE'S NEST.

JANE Austen Beecher Stowe de Rouse  
Was good beyond all earthly need;  
But, on the other hand, her spouse  
Was very, very bad indeed.  
He smoked cigars, called churches slow,  
And raced—but this she did not  
know.

For Belial Machiavelli kept  
The little fact a secret, and,  
Though o'er his minor sins she wept,  
Jane Austen did not understand  
That Lilly—thirteen-two and bay—  
Absorbed one-half her husband's pay.

She was so good, she made him worse;  
(Some women are like this, I think;)  
He taught her parrot how to curse,  
Her Assam monkey how to drink.  
He vexed her righteous soul until  
She went up, and he went down hill.

THE MARE'S NEST.

Then came the crisis, strange to say,  
Which turned a good wife to a better.  
A telegraphic peon, one day,  
Brought her—now, had it been a letter  
For Belial Machiavelli, I  
Know Jane would just have let it lie.

But 'twas a telegram instead,  
Marked "urgent," and her duty plain  
To open it. Jane Austen read:—  
"Your Lilly's got a cough again.  
Can't understand why she is kept  
At your expense." Jane Austen wept.

It was a misdirected wire.  
Her husband was at Shaitanpore.  
She spread her anger, hot as fire,  
Through six thin foreign sheets or  
more,  
Sent off that letter, wrote another  
To her solicitor—and mother.

THE MARE'S NEST.

Then Belial Machiavelli saw  
Her error and, I trust, his own,  
Wired to the minion of the Law,  
And travelled wifeward—not alone.  
For Lilly—thirteen-two and bay—  
Came in a horse-box all the way.

There was a scene—a weep or two—  
With many kisses. Austen Jane  
Rode Lilly all the season through,  
And never opened wires again.  
She races now with Belial. This  
Is very sad, but so it is.

IN SPRINGTIME.

MY garden blazes brightly with the  
rose-bush and the peach,

And the *köil* sings above it, in the *siris*  
by the well,

From the creeper-covered trellis comes  
the squirrel's chattering speech,

And the blue-jay screams and flutters  
where the cheery *sat-bhai* dwell.

But the rose has lost its fragrance, and  
the *köil's* note is strange;

I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of  
blossom-burdened bough.

Give me back the leafless woodlands  
where the winds of Springtime  
range—

Give me back one day in England, for  
it's Spring in England now!

Through the pines the gusts are booming,  
o'er the brown fields blowing chill,

IN SPRINGTIME.

From the furrow of the ploughshare  
streams the fragrance of the loam,  
And the hawk nests on the cliff-side and  
the jackdaw in the hill,  
And my heart is back in England mid  
the sights and sounds of Home.  
But the garland of the sacrifice this wealth  
of rose and peach is;  
Ah! *köil*, little *köil*, singing on the *siris*  
bough,  
In my ears the knell of exile your cease-  
less bell-like speech is—  
Can *you* tell me aught of England or of  
Spring in England now?







THE OVERLAND MAIL.

*(Foot-Service to the Hills.)*

I N the name of the Empress of India,  
make way,

O Lords of the Jungle, wherever you  
roam.

The woods are astir at the close of the  
day—

We exiles are waiting for letters from  
Home.

Let the robber retreat—let the tiger turn  
tail—

In the Name of the Empress, the Over-  
land Mail!

With a jingle of bells as the dusk gathers  
in,

He turns to the foot-path that heads  
up the hill—

The bags on his back and a cloth round  
his chin,

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

And, tucked in his waist-belt, the Post  
Office bill:—

“ Despatched on this date, as received by  
the rail,

*Per* runner, two bags of the Overland  
Mail.”

Is the torrent in spate? He must ford it  
or swim.

Has the rain wrecked the road? He  
must climb by the cliff.

Does the tempest cry “Halt”? What  
are tempests to him?

The Service admits not a “but” or  
an “if.”

While the breath's in his mouth, he must  
bear without fail,

In the Name of the Empress, the Over-  
land Mail.

From aloe to rose-oak, from rose-oak to  
fir,

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

From level to upland, from upland to  
crest,  
From rice-field to rock-ridge, from rock-  
ridge to spur,  
Fly the soft sandalled feet, strains the  
brawny brown chest.  
From rail to ravine—to the peak from the  
vale—  
Up, up through the night goes the Over-  
land Mail.

There's a speck on the hillside, a dot on  
the road—  
A jingle of bells on the foot-path  
below—  
There's a scuffle above in the monkey's  
abode—  
The world is awake, and the clouds are  
aglow.

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

For the great Sun himself must attend to  
the hail:—

“ In the name of the Empress, the Over-  
land Mail! ”

POSSIBILITIES.

A Y, lay him 'neath the Simla pine—  
A fortnight fully to be missed,  
Behold, we lose our fourth at whist,  
A chair is vacant where we dine.

His place forgets him; other men  
Have bought his ponies, guns and traps.  
His fortune is the Great Perhaps  
And that cool rest-house down the glen,

Whence he shall hear, as spirits may,  
Our mundane revel on the height,  
Shall watch each flashing '*rickshaw-*  
light

Sweep on to dinner, dance and play.

Benmore shall woo him to the ball  
With lighted rooms and braying band,  
And he shall hear and understand  
“*Dream Faces*” better than us all.

POSSIBILITIES.

For, think you, as the vapors flee  
    Across Sanjaolie after rain,  
    His soul may climb the hill again  
To each old field of victory.

Unseen, who women held so dear,  
    The strong man's yearning to his  
    kind  
    Shall shake at most the window-blind,  
Or dull awhile the card-room's cheer.

In his own place of power unknown,  
    His Light o' Love another's flame,  
    His dearest pony galloped lame.  
And he an alien and alone.

Yet may he meet with many a friend—  
    Shrewd shadows, lingering long un-  
    seen  
    Among us when "*God save the Queen*"  
Shows even "extras" have an end.



POSSIBILITIES.

And, when we leave the heated room,  
And, when at four the lights expire,  
The crew shall gather round the fire  
And mock our laughter in the gloom.

Talk as we talked, and they ere death—  
First wanly, dance in ghostly wise,  
With ghosts of tunes for melodies,  
And vanish at the morning's breath.

THE BETROTHED.

“YOU must choose between me and your cigar.”

OPEN the old cigar-box, get me a  
Cuba stout,  
For things are running crossways, and  
Maggie and I are out.

We quarrelled about Havanas—we fought  
o'er a good cheroot,  
And I know she is exacting, and she says I  
am a brute.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider  
a space;  
In the soft blue veil of the vapor, musing  
on Maggie's face.

Maggie is pretty to look at—Maggie's a  
loving lass,  
But the prettiest cheeks must wrinkle,  
the truest of loves must pass.

THE BETROTHED.

There's peace in a Laranaga, there's calm  
in a Henry Clay,  
But the best cigar in an hour is finished  
and thrown away—

Thrown away for another as perfect and  
ripe and brown—  
But I could not throw away Maggie for  
fear o' the talk o' the town!

Maggie, my wife at fifty—gray and dour  
and old—  
With never another Maggie to purchase  
for love or gold!

And the light of Days that have Been, the  
dark of the Days that Are,  
And Love's torch stinking and stale, like  
the butt of a dead cigar—

The butt of a dead cigar you are bound  
to keep in your pocket—

THE BETROTHED.

With never a new one to light tho' it's  
charred and black to the socket.

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider  
a while—

Here is a mild Manilla—there is a wifely  
smile.

Which is the better portion—bondage  
bought with a ring,  
Or a harem of dusky beauties fifty tied in  
a string ?

Counsellors cunning and silent—com-  
forters true and true.  
And never a one of the fifty to sneer at a  
rival bride.

Thought in the early morning, solace in  
time of woes,  
Peace in the hush of the twilight, balm  
ere my eyelids close.

THE BETROTHED.

This will the fifty give me, asking nought  
in return,

With only a *Suttee's* passion—to do their  
duty and burn.

This will the fifty give me. When they  
are spent and dead,

Five times other fifties shall be my ser-  
vants instead.

The furrows of far-off Java, the isles of  
the Spanish Main,

When they hear my harem is empty, will  
send me my brides again.

I will take no heed to their raiment, nor  
food for their mouth withal,

So long as the gulls are nesting, so long  
as the showers fall.

I will scent 'em with best vanilla, with tea  
will I temper their hides,

THE BETROTHED.

And the Moor and the Mormon shall envy  
who read of the tale of my brides.

For Maggie has written a letter to give  
me my choice between  
The wee little whimpering Love and the  
great god Nick o' Teen.

And I have been servant of Love for  
barely a twelvemonth clear,  
But I have been Priest of Partagas a  
matter of seven year;

And the gloom of my bachelor days is  
flecked with the cheery light  
Of stumps that I burned to Friendship  
and Pleasure and Work and Fight.

And I turn my eyes to the future that  
Maggie and I must prove,  
But the only light on the marshes is the  
Will-o'-the-Wisp of Love.

THE BETROTHED.

Will it see me safe through my journey,  
or leave me bogged in the mire?  
Since a puff of tobacco can cloud it, shall  
I follow the fitful fire?

Open the old cigar-box—let me consider  
anew—  
Old friends, and who is Maggie that I  
should abandon *you*?

A million surplus Maggies are willing to  
bear the yoke;  
And a woman is only a woman, but a  
good cigar is a Smoke.

Light me another Cuba; I hold to my  
first-sworn vows,  
If Maggie will have no rival, I'll have no  
Maggie for spouse!





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